

### Elijah (Part I) - The Power of Courage!

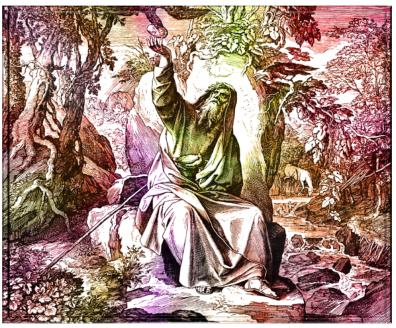
1 Kings 18:21: (NASB) Elijah came near to all the people and said, how long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him. But the people did not answer him a word.



Courage is perhaps the most underrated, underappreciated and invisible virtue of our time. We are so busy complying with the status quo, with watching our words and with following what others say and do on social media that we seem to have forgotten the simple, yet powerful virtue of courage. Courage is stepping up, stepping out and standing against the tide of darkness. Courage is being what you know you should be when it is unpopular with others. Courage is having the guts to listen when others only want to argue; it is reaching out to give when others are focused on taking, and courage is leading by example

when following in anonymity would be so much easier. Courage, when observed, insights others to stand, it provokes others to act and it plants hope where there previously was none. Yes, we need courage, but how do we find it and how do we learn to be truly courageous?

Our focus will be on Elijah, a prophet of God and one of the most courageous examples in all of Scripture. The reasons for his great courage will be revealed as we see the context of his life. This is the first of a three-part series on the life of Elijah.





Listen for more on the life of Elijah! Coming up on our February 6, 2017 episode, "Elijah - (Part II) The Power of Submission!" and on February 20, 2017, "Elijah - (Part III) The Power of Legacy!"



# Courage defined, What is Courage, Eric Kaufmann

• Fearlessness is not really a possibility; courage is a possibility, and courage I define in a really simple way. My definition of courage is walking towards what you'd rather run away from. It's really not that complicated - walking towards what you'd rather run away from. That's the definition of courage. It's not about being fearless, it's not about destroying something, it's not about completely overcoming it. It's about moving into what you'd rather run away from.

Eric Kaufmann's definition helps give the average person hope to be courageous. We all have the makings of real courage. Courage is not an absence of fear; it is simply "walking towards what you would rather run away from." While looking at the life of Elijah, we will be going through thirteen lessons on courage. We will state the lesson first and then go through the section of Scriptures that brings the lesson to life for Elijah.



Prophets were sent to Israel when the rulership strayed away from God and they needed someone to stand up and say, "Stop, look up and reset."



### What was the problem that required courage to be summoned?

1 Kings 16:29-33: (NRSV) <sup>29</sup>In the thirty-eighth year of King Asa of Judah, (the two tribe Kingdom of Israel) Ahab son of Omri began to reign over Israel (the ten tribe Kingdom of Israel); Ahab...reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. <sup>30</sup>Ahab...did evil in the sight of the LORD more than all who were before him. <sup>31</sup>And as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, he took as his wife Jezebel daughter of King Ethbaal of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshiped him.

Ahab was evil and married Jezebel who was from a severely pagan background. She was the daughter of Ethbaal. Great evil existed from the union of Ahab, who reigned over the ten tribes for twenty-two years, and his wife Jezebel.



(Source: Biblical commentary by J. Vernon McGee) Ahab was evil, and he had a wife that helped him with his evil ways. She was a real helpmeet in the area of evil. (He is referring to the Genesis Scriptures that say, Adam's wife would be a helpmeet for him. In the case of Jezebel, wouldn't she have been a "hurtmeet" for him?) What Ahab didn't think of, Jezebel did. What she didn't think of nobody else could — she was a mean woman. The combination of Ahab and Jezebel was the worst possible. You can be sure that Mr. and Mrs. Haman were bad. Herod and Herodias were evil enough. And we know of Ptolemy Dionysius and Cleopatra — they were quite a couple. Philip I of Spain and Bloody Mary also did pretty well together. These are four of the most infamous couples in history... All of these are couples that stand out on the pages of history as being evil, but none can exceed Ahab and Jezebel — they head the list.

<sup>32</sup>He erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he built in Samaria. <sup>33</sup>Ahab also made a sacred pole. Ahab did more to provoke the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, than had all the kings of Israel who were before him.

Ahab did more to provoke the anger of the LORD, than all the kings of Israel before him.

God was patient for twenty-two years and allowed this evil to take place before he dealt with it. He allows free will and evil to come to its fruition throughout all generations, which will be dealt with in the future in His Kingdom.

#### History on the worship of Baal:

(Source: Gotquestions.org) According to Canaanite mythology, Baal was the son of El, the chief god, and Asherah, the goddess of the sea. Baal was considered the most powerful of all gods, eclipsing El, who was seen as rather weak and ineffective. In various battles Baal defeated Yamm, the god of the sea, and Mot, the god of death and the underworld. Baal's sisters/consorts were Ashtoreth, a fertility goddess associated with the stars, and Anath, a goddess of love and war. The Canaanites worshiped Baal as the sun god and as the storm god — he is usually depicted holding a lightning bolt — who defeated enemies and produced crops. They also worshiped him as a fertility god who provided children. (Baal became a centerpiece in ancient history for people to worship.) Baal worship was rooted in sensuality and involved ritualistic prostitution in the temples. At times, appeasing Baal required human sacrifice, usually the firstborn of the one making the sacrifice (Jeremiah 19:5). The priests of Baal appealed to their god in rites of wild abandon, which included loud, ecstatic cries and self-inflicted injury (1 Kings 18:28).

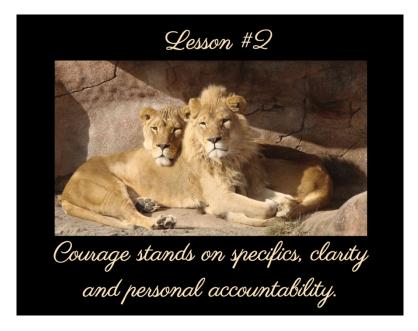
There is a lot of emotionalism, sensuality, and dramatic actions in the worship of Baal and humanity loves these things.

1 Kings 17:1: (NASB) Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab...

"Elijah" means "My God is Jehovah." Courage had arrived, and he is named "Loyalty." Elijah stood for loyalty to God Almighty! The God of Israel had been misrepresented and the people were worshipping something that was causing them to degrade dramatically. Idolatry poisoned the people.



#### What drives true courage?



This lesson is important because courage is not raw emotion.

1 Kings 17:1: (NASB) Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.

In this verse, there is very clear direction on how to implement courage.

Specifics: The Lord God lives, despite all you have done to disavow Him.

Clarity: I represent the Lord God and no other and here is His message of your punishment.

Accountability: My word as God's prophet can release this punishment. Elijah was given the power to implement God's will. This took great courage.

### Three rings, What is Courage, Eric Kaufmann

To lead is to leave the comfort zone, to leave the familiar. The comfort zone essentially has three rings.
 There's a comfort zone, there's a growth zone, the panic zone. Your comfort zone is where everything is habituated and known and easy. The growth zone is where possibility, potential growth, innovation, evolution, all the things that you want that you don't currently have personally, as a team, as an organization, in a relationship,





spiritually. Fundamentally, everything that you want that you don't have is not in the comfort zone, it's in the growth zone. If you push too far you go into the panic zone - you start freaking out. For me, jumping out of an airplane to overcome the fear of heights was a panic zone thing and did nothing to fix it. It's the courage to leave the comfort zone.

The growth zone is not comfortable but it doesn't bring panic. It brings us to "walk towards what you'd rather run away from." The panic zone is when you are put in a situation that is too big for you. Our courage is when we walk from where we are comfortable into the growth zone.



1 Kings 17:2-7: (NASB) <sup>2</sup>The word of the LORD came to him, saying, <sup>3</sup>Go away from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan.

Elijah was told to run and hide; how is this courageous? To hide was God's will for a time to protect Elijah in a natural way until God's punishment could fully develop. Time was needed for the drought to come and have its full effect.

<sup>4</sup>It shall be that you will drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there. <sup>5</sup>So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and lived by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. <sup>6</sup>The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he would drink from the brook.



Elijah was provided for miraculously as he hid naturally. No one would have seen these provisions, but they strengthened him both physically and spiritually. He was courageously and patiently waiting for God's purposes.

 $^{7}$ It happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

Elijah personally felt the effects of the drought and therefore personally saw God's purpose unfold. He was standing courageously.





Stand: When you can do no more, stand. "Having done all things, stand." But beware how and where you stand. "Stand fast in the faith." Stand on covenant ground. Stand with face to foe. Stand watching, waiting, victorious. "Stand still and see the salvation of God." Stand not in your own caprice, or by human order. Even though Red Sea barriers lie across your way it may be the will of God that you go forward without a halt. It is easier to march than to stand. It is easier to rush forward to the charge than to stand still and receive the fiery assault. The good soldier must be ready for both. They serve well who march and fight for their king. But "they also serve who only stand and wait." Patience and fortitude are precious in the sight of God, and "to obey is better than sacrifice." Where patience can have her perfect work, whether in the stress and strain of conflict, or in the trial of waiting, there it is good to be.

## (1) Maya Angelou on Courage, YouTube

• I mentioned courage, and I would like to say something else about that - finding courage in the leaders and in you who will become leaders. Courage is the most important of all the virtues because without courage you can't practice any other virtue consistently. You can't be consistently kind or fair or humane or generous, not without courage because if you don't have it, sooner or later you'll stop and say, "The threat is too much. The difficulty is too high; the challenge is too great."

Without courage, all the other virtues will go unpracticed. Unless you stand, you cannot show what it is you stand for. It was courageous for Elijah to stand and hide. That was God's will at the time.



### Courage has an internal confidence when standing up for something.

1 Kings 17:8-16: (NASB) <sup>8</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, <sup>9</sup>Arise, go to Zarephath... (home of Gentiles) and stay there; behold, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you. <sup>10</sup>So he arose...and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks; and he called to her and said, please get me a little water in a jar that I may drink. <sup>11</sup>As she was going to get it, he called to her and said, please bring me a piece of bread in your hand. <sup>12</sup>But she said, As the LORD your God lives, I have no bread, only a handful



of flour in the bowl and a little oil in the jar; and behold, I am gathering a few sticks that I may go in and prepare for me and my son, that we may eat it and die.

The widow was willing to serve him because she realized Elijah was God's prophet. She showed courage in the face of death.

<sup>13</sup>Then Elijah said to her, do not fear; go, do as you have said, but make me a little bread cake from it first and bring it out to me, and afterward you may make one for yourself and for your son. <sup>14</sup>For thus says the LORD God of Israel, the bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain on the face of the earth. <sup>15</sup>So she went and did according to the word of Elijah, and she and he and her household ate for many days. <sup>16</sup>The bowl of flour was not exhausted nor did the jar of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD, which He spoke through Elijah.



Reward for courage: The widow was given just enough *miraculous provision* until she was again capable of providing for herself. God gives just enough to get us by when we cannot do it for ourselves.

How does courage respond when things just do not make sense?



Elijah had to hold his courage for a long period through unanticipated events.



## First - feel, What is Courage, Eric Kaufmann

• First of all, you have to feel what you'd rather not feel. You know what fear feels like? You know that tightness in the gut or the butterflies, that constriction in the chest, the tightness in the neck, sweaty palms, the increased heart rate and breathing. You know what that is right? In a way, the reason we don't want to feel the fear is because it feels so uncomfortable, it's unpalatable. We don't want it; we want to get away from it. In effect, pausing and saying, "How do I actually feel?" See, when you pause and feel it you've already started the courageous action because you didn't run away from it. You didn't run away from the discomfort, you walked towards it.

When you recognize the fear, you have already started the courageous action because you didn't run away from it.

#### Things were going along well for Elijah until...

1 Kings 17:17-24: (NASB) <sup>17</sup>Now it came about after these things that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became sick; and his sickness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. <sup>18</sup>So she said to Elijah, what do I have to do with you, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my iniquity to remembrance and to put my son to death!

This Gentile woman was stricken with grief and immediately blames Elijah, the prophet who was in fact responsible for her family being alive about a year before this event. Harsh loss makes our memories short.

<sup>19</sup>He said to her, Give me your son. Then he took him from her bosom and carried him up to the upper room where he was living, and laid him on his own bed. <sup>20</sup>He called to the LORD and said, O LORD my God; have You also brought calamity to the widow with whom I am staying, by causing her son to die?

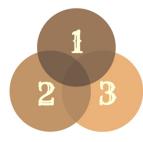
Elijah expressed confusion. This woman showed faith, hospitality and courage and now this? Surely God's hand would not be short here. It took courage and bold humility to take his concern before God.

<sup>21</sup>Then he stretched himself upon the child **three times**, and called to the LORD and said, O LORD my God, I pray You, let this child's life return to him. <sup>22</sup>The LORD heard the voice of Elijah, and the life of the child returned to him and he revived. <sup>23</sup>Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house and gave him to his mother; and Elijah said, see, your son is alive.

Three times: This sequence usually shows us the *completeness* of an experience. Examples: Jesus was tempted with three different temptations by Satan, Jesus called the Apostle Peter three different times to follow him, and he also asked him three times, "do you love me?" Peter denied Jesus three times.

Perhaps it signified Elijah's complete willingness to:

- 1. Be humble before God.
- 2. Ask boldly for a miracle.
- 3. Act boldly to receive it. He laid himself over the child three times.





<sup>24</sup>Then the woman said to Elijah, Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth.

The result is a grounded faith in God and his prophet. Just like King Nebuchadnezzar, the woman had an appreciation for God at first, which developed into a deep faith in God.

The following sound byte is an interview with three different people and their inspirational experiences with courage.

Three people's courage, 6 Ways People Found Courage, CNN 9-2013

- (Reporter) Where do you find the courage?
- (Woman dealing with great pain) I think I am a person who represents you never give up. You find a way. If something is really important to your heart, you look and see what's inside yourself and you find a way.
- (Woman who lost her leg in the Boston marathon bombing) I don't want this to be the end so whether it's running the marathon or walking the marathon or crawling the marathon and being the last one across, I am okay with that. I didn't say I'd win it, but I am defiant and I want to come out stronger.
- (Woman with painful experiences) Just continue to push and solve. Every time things come on I always say to myself to push past the pain, it's going to be okay. So, I know today no matter what, I can push past the pain.

The following chat comment is in response to a little joke we made earlier about Jezebel being a "hurtmeet" instead of a "helpmeet."



Chat comment: <u>2 Corinthians 6:14-17</u> warns us not to unite with "hurtmeets." <u>Verse 17</u>: (NASB) Wherefore, come out from their midst and be separate, says the Lord, and do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you. Sometimes courage is walking away from what we are drawn to.





 $\underline{1 \text{ Kings } 18:1-2}$ : (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Now it happened after many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying,

After many days - gives the idea God just let Elijah wait and survive, just like the rest of the people for three years. Again, we have the symbol of a complete experience. Sometimes just standing takes the greatest courage. If we stand, we can prepare ourselves to be ultimately courageous when we must charge forward.



Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth.

God is specific: go find the King who would see you dead in an instant.

<sup>2</sup>So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria.

It is instant and unambiguous obedience. There is no discussion, no questioning how it is to work, just a simple acquiescence to God's command. He followed the will of God!



A caller from Montana suggests: This has been very encouraging for me. I am especially strengthened by realizing courage is feeling what you would rather not feel. For me, the phrase, "walking toward what you what to run away from," I would add walking side by side with Jesus toward what I want to run away from. Who are we walking with? Psalm 56:3-4: (KJV) \*\*What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. \*\*In God I will praise His word; in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me. There are a lot of incidents in my life that require walking towards what I would rather run away from. These steps you mentioned have been very practical. I had an experience with skydiving and courage. The only reason I could do it was because I pictured myself tandem with Christ.

### ))What makes you that guy, Live Free or Die Hard, Movie

- What? What's the matter with you?
- It's not funny. I am not like you. I can't do this.
- What's that mean? Like what?
- Like heroic, I'm not brave like you are. I'm not "That Guy."
- I'm nobody's hero kid.
- You've saved my life like ten times in the last six hours.
- Just doing my job that's all. You know what you get for being a hero? Nothing. You get shot at. You get a little pat on the back. Atta boy. You get divorced. Your wife can't even remember your last name; kids don't want to talk to you. You get to eat a lot of meals by yourself. Trust me kid, nobody wants to be that guy.
- Then why are you doing this?
- Because there's nobody else to do it right now. That's why. Believe me if there was somebody else to do it I would let them do it, but there's not, so we're doing it.
- That's what makes you That Guy.



The phrase, "That's what makes you That Guy," helps to us focus on being that individual that will stand when others will not.



1 Kings 18:3-6: (NASB) <sup>3</sup>Ahab called Obadiah who was over the household. Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly; <sup>4</sup>for when Jezebel destroyed the prophets of the LORD, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave, and provided them with bread and water.

Obadiah was a trusted servant of King Ahab and his courage was to fly under the deadly radar of Ahab and Jezebel. Searching for Elijah distracted Ahab and Jezebel. This covert operation of Obadiah's required exceptional courage, planning, secrecy, energy, wisdom and perseverance. He was driven by his loyalty to God and the sacredness of life.

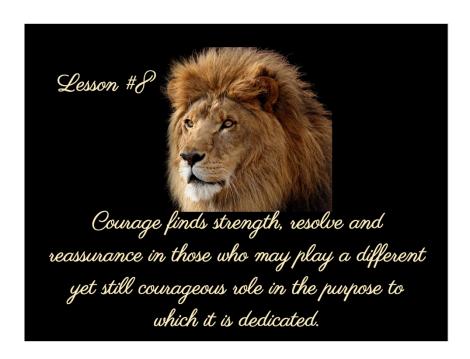
<sup>5</sup>Then Ahab said to Obadiah, go through the land to all the springs of water and to all the valleys; perhaps we will find grass and keep the horses and mules alive, and not have to kill some of the cattle. <sup>6</sup>So they divided the land between them to survey it; Ahab went one way by himself and Obadiah went another way by himself.

Obadiah had Ahab's trust as Ahab undoubtedly recognized the strength of his character and the zealousness of his actions as he was a protector of life.

(I)) Second - face, What is Courage, Eric Kaufmann

First, feel. That allows you to do the next thing, which is to face it. To face it is to name it, to call it what it is. "I am really terrified that if I take on this project I'm going to fail, I'm going to look like an idiot and I'm not going to have promotion opportunity." Well, how does it feel? My stomach is tight, my shoulders are tight, my jaws are tight - that's one. Then I need to face it. What is it actually that's going on? I am afraid of failure. That's feeling and facing it.







Jonathan's personal experience with courage: Soon after I answered the call from the Lord to follow in His son's footsteps, we had a very difficult family experience. My oldest sister and her husband were in a car accident, and for my sister it was a fatal car accident. We all rushed to the hospital in the town where the accident took place. No one in my family wanted to go to the car to get her belongings. It was too difficult. Because no one would do it, I had to step up and go and actually see where my sister died. It was a scary and hard thing to do, but I had to do it. The Lord gave me the courage to step out and take care of it. I did it because it had to be done. Also at the funeral, I spoke for about five minutes and shared the hope of God's kingdom. It was frightening for me to stand up and speak but I wanted to share the hope of one day seeing my sister again.

Rick: You went out of your comfort zone and into your growth zone. By God's grace, others were blessed by that. Courage blesses other people.

1 Kings 18:7-15: (NASB) <sup>7</sup>Now as Obadiah was on the way, behold, Elijah met him, and he recognized him and fell on his face and said, Is this you, Elijah my master? <sup>8</sup>He said to him, it is I. Go, say to your master, behold, Elijah is here.

Obadiah was courageous in his humility for he knew the power of God that flowed through Elijah.

<sup>9</sup>He said, what sin have I committed, that you are giving your servant into the hand of Ahab to put me to death? <sup>10</sup>As the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent to search for you; and when they said, he is not here, he made the kingdom or nation swear that they could not find you. <sup>11</sup>And now you are saying, go, say to your master, behold, Elijah is here.

Ahab's frantic and fearful search for Elijah is here revealed, as Ahab would stop at nothing to find Elijah. Obadiah was afraid.



<sup>12</sup>It will come about when I leave you that the Spirit of the LORD will carry you where I do not know; so, when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find you, he will kill me, although I your servant have feared the LORD from my youth. <sup>13</sup>Has it not been told to my master what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the LORD, that I hid a hundred prophets of the LORD by fifties in a cave, and provided them with bread and water? <sup>14</sup>And now you are saying, Go, say to your master, Behold, Elijah is here; he will then kill me. <sup>15</sup>Elijah said, As the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to him today.

Obadiah was concerned and needed reassurance as he witnessed Ahab's evil firsthand. Sometimes our courage needs reassurance as well.

How does courage respond when finally put to the test?



Obadiah did wonderful work for God by preserving life. He was a hero.

<u>1 Kings 18:16-19</u>: (NASB) <sup>16</sup>So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah. (Even though he was afraid, he did what he needed to do. He was sincere and courageous.) <sup>17</sup>When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, is this you, you troubler of Israel? <sup>18</sup>He said, I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, because you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and you have followed the Baals. <sup>19</sup>Now then send and gather to me all Israel at Mount Carmel, together with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table.

Obadiah and Elijah risked their lives with the messages they bore as Elijah laid out a serious challenge.



Rick's experience: My 15-year-old daughter was assaulted and raped. I sat there in shock, horror and disbelief. I will never forget sitting around our dining room table with my wife, son and two daughters and we were devastated. I sat there and thought to myself, my family needs me. I didn't know what to do. I didn't feel courageous. I was scared, broken and I was torn



to pieces on the inside. Something told me to stand up for your family and lead them through this horrible experience. By God's grace, He showed me what to do. He never showed me more than the next step. For me that was a way to step out in courage in a way I never would have experienced. I encourage you to listen to that story because it is an inspiring story of courage and overcoming.

Please see the CQ program from August 31, 2014, "What Happens When Life Gets Broken?"

## Third - embrace, What is Courage, Eric Kaufmann

• And the third part is that you are actually going to embrace it. To embrace it, not obliterate it, not ignore it, but you're going to move ten percent, fifteen percent, twenty percent closer to what it is. To embrace is to say, "What's the plan? What am I going to do? How do I remain in a forward motion in spite of my discomfort, and choose to walk towards what I would rather run away from?" Because that's courage. If you want any kind of accomplishment in leadership, in life, in love, courage is the first virtue that makes all the other ones possible.

You need to embrace the experience in front of you. Accept it as something that is in front of you.



Often true courage can look foolish to the people around you.

1 Kings 18:20-25: (NASB) <sup>20</sup>So Ahab sent a message among all the sons of Israel and brought the prophets together at Mount Carmel. <sup>21</sup>Elijah came near to all the people and said, how long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him. But the people did not answer him a word. (Decide and take a stand) <sup>22</sup>Then Elijah said to the people, I alone am left a prophet of the LORD, but Baal's prophets are 450 men.



<sup>23</sup>Now let them give us two oxen; and let them choose one ox for themselves and cut it up, and place it on the wood, **but put no fire under it**; and I will prepare the other ox and lay it on the wood, and I will not put a fire under it. <sup>24</sup>Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD, and **the God who answers by fire, He is God**. And all the people said, that is a good idea. <sup>25</sup>So Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, choose one ox for yourselves and prepare it first for you are many, and call on the name of your god, **but put no fire under it**.

This incredible challenge played into the emotions of the pagans, for they were in control of the nation, had all but eliminated any resistance and *outnumbered Elijah 450 to one*. He is speaking with belief, boldness, power, passion and conviction. Elijah is controlling this entire experience.

1 Kings 18:26-29: (NASB) <sup>26</sup>Then they took the ox, which was given them, and they prepared it and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon saying, O Baal, answer us. But there was no voice and no one answered. And they leaped about the altar, which they made. <sup>27</sup>It came about at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened.

Elijah fed the frenzy, for all pagan worship survives and thrives on emotion. Pagan Christian worship also thrives on pure emotionalism as well. Without the principles of righteousness and truth, we're missing the boat. Paganism is missing the boat here.

<sup>28</sup>So they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them. <sup>29</sup>When midday was past, they raved until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice; but there was no voice, no one answered, and no one paid attention. (Because there was nobody there.)

Courage allows events to unfold and reveal truth!





1 Kings 18:30-32: (NASB) <sup>30</sup>Then Elijah said to all the people, Come near to me. So, all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD, which had been torn down. <sup>31</sup>Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, Israel shall be your name. <sup>32</sup>So with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he made a trench around the altar, large enough to hold two measures of seed.

Elijah calls the people to come near to him. He rebuilds the altar that was used to make legitimate sacrifices to God with twelve stones to represent the twelve tribes of Israel. Israel was broken into two pieces here and he is using twelve stones to send a message and represent the unity of Israel under the rule of God Almighty. Elijah is so powerful in his courage to stand that the crowd was afraid.

#### What is the result of courage that is boldly applied?

Terminally ill boy, 6 Ways People Found Courage, CNN 9-2013

• Sometimes I say, "Why me?" Why have I had such a hard life? Why have my siblings died? Why does it not go away? Then I think again, why not me? Better me than a kid who already has stress on his life or better me than a baby who wouldn't understand it and who has a better chance of hurting more. So, I think "Why me?" And then I think "Why not me?"

#### That is courage!



<u>1 Kings 18:33-39</u>: (NASB) <sup>33</sup>Then he arranged the wood and cut the ox in pieces and laid it on the wood. <sup>34</sup>And he said, fill four pitchers with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood. And he said, do it a second time, and they did it a second time. And he said, do it a third time, and they did it a third time. (The purpose of the water was to show there was nothing hidden.)



He used the precious commodity of water and again we see three times, perhaps indicating this experience would be a complete proclamation of God's sovereign authority over Israel.

<sup>35</sup>The water flowed around the altar and he also filled the trench with water. <sup>36</sup>At the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet came near and said, O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and I have done all these things at Your word. <sup>37</sup>Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that You, O LORD, are God, and that You have turned their heart back again.

Elijah speaks out loud to God to create a "no doubt about it" experience that God would be revealed.

<sup>38</sup>Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. <sup>39</sup>When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, The LORD, He is God; the LORD, He is God.



The drama of the moment cannot be overstated. God consumed everything! One man stood against hundreds and proved to all, that God is God and He is mighty and is to be praised.



A caller from Connecticut suggests: It is a challenge and takes courage to go out in the world today. He recalls the courage of Peter, Daniel and David. With God, all things are possible.

1 Kings 18:40-46: (NASB) <sup>40</sup>Then Elijah said to them, seize the prophets of Baal; do not let one of them escape. So, they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there. (The prophets of Baal will be raised in the resurrection.) <sup>41</sup>Now Elijah said to Ahab, go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of the roar of a heavy shower. (Not a literal sound, but the sound of God's will fulfilled for those who are faithful.) <sup>42</sup>So Ahab went up to eat and drink. But Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he crouched down on the earth and put his face between his knees. <sup>43</sup>He said to his servant, go up now, look toward the sea. So, he went up and looked and said, there is nothing. And he said, go back seven times (seven represents divine perfection.) <sup>44</sup>It came about at the seventh time, that he said, behold, a cloud as small as a man's hand is coming up from the sea. And he said, go up, say to Ahab, prepare your chariot and go down, so that the heavy shower does not stop you. (Elijah continues to command the King. The power of God overrides the power of man.) <sup>45</sup>In a little



while the sky grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy shower. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. <sup>46</sup>Then the hand of the LORD was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins and outran Ahab to Jezreel. (The distance he ran here was about 16 miles.)

Evil had to be destroyed, the King had to be taught and the rain had to come - all proofs of the sovereignty of God and all came to pass through the courageous acts of one man.



- I was born in Memphis, Tennessee. I had a long haul from where I came from to here but here we are, so the proof of the pudding is in the eating and here we sit at the dining table.
- But it's hard to when you say that to some people because they say, "Oh
  there you go with pull yourself up by the boot straps" thing and "You're just
  being respectable. Not everybody can do that."
- Everybody can but everybody doesn't. Courage is the key to life itself. There are a lot of people who are born in a situation who say, I'll never get out of this so they won't. I say to people who say I would have like to done so and so, well you could have done it and they say I couldn't get out of here. I would say, Man, the bus runs every day.



1 Kings 19:1-3: (NASB) ¹Now Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ²Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, So may the gods do to me and even more, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time. ³And he was afraid and arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

Jezebel threatens Elijah's life and he runs. How is that possible that Elijah is afraid? We are not perfect and none of us can overcome all the fear inside of



us and it is okay. In Part II of our series on Elijah we will walk through some of his fearful and depressed times and see how God blessed him, so we can get to the third part of the story of Elijah in which he creates an incredible legacy.

Elijah (Part I) - The Power of Courage! For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions.. Think about it...!

And now <u>even more</u> to think about... only in the Full Edition of CQ Rewind!



#### Two Commentaries to help us get to know Elijah:

#### (Source: Smith's Revised Bible Dictionary)

(ELI'JAH) Elijah the Tishbite has been well entitled "the grandest and the most romantic character that Israel ever produced." Certainly, there is no personage in the Old Testament whose career is more vividly portrayed, or who exercises on us a more remarkable fascination. His rare, sudden, and brief appearances, his undaunted courage and fiery zeal, the brilliancy of his triumphs, the pathos of his despondency, the glory of his departure, and the calm beauty of his reappearance on the Mount of Transfiguration, throw such a halo of brightness around him as is equaled by none of his compeers in the sacred story. The ignorance in which we are left of the circumstances and antecedents of the man who did and who suffered so much, doubtless contributes to enhance our interest in the story and the character. "Elijah the Tishbite of the inhabitants of Gilead," is literally all that is given us to know of his parentage and locality. It is in remarkable contrast to the detail with which the genealogies of other prophets and leaders of Israel are stated. Where the place - if it was a place lay, which gave him this appellation we know not, nor are we likely to know. It is not again found in the Bible, nor has any name answering to it been discovered since. It was in the wild loneliness of the hills and ravines of Gilead that the knowledge of Jehovah, the living God of Israel, had been impressed on his mind, which was to form the subject of his mission to the idolatrous court and country of Israel.

#### (Source: Nelson's Bible Dictionary)

ELIJAH [ee LIE juh] (the Lord is my God) - the name of three or four men in the Old Testament: 1. A Benjamite, the son of Jeroham <1 Chronicles 8:27>.

2. An influential prophet who lived during the ninth century B. C. during the reigns of Ahab and Ahaziah in the northern kingdom of Israel. Elijah shaped the history of his day and dominated Hebrew thinking for centuries afterward. Elijah's prophetic activities emphasized the unconditional loyalty to God required of the nation of Israel. His strange dress and appearance <2 Kings 1:8>, his fleetness of foot <1 Kings 18:46>, his rugged constitution that resisted famine <1 Kings 19:8>, and his cave-dwelling habits <1 Kings 17:3; 19:9> all suggest that he was a robust, outdoors-type personality. Elijah was opposed to the accepted standards of his day, when belief in many gods was normal. He



appears in the role of God's instrument of judgment upon a wayward Israel because of the nation's widespread idolatry. The miracles that Elijah performed occurred during the period when a life-or-death struggle took place between the religion of Jehovah and BAAL worship. Elijah's views were in conflict with those of King Ahab. Ahab had attempted to cultivate economic ties with Israel's neighbors, especially Tyre. One of the consequences was that he had married Jezebel, a daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre. Ahab saw no harm in participating in the religion of his neighbors, particularly the religion of his wife. Therefore, he established a center of BAAL worship at Samaria. Influenced by Jezebel, Ahab gave himself to the worship of Baal. Suddenly Elijah appeared on the scene.

**Prediction of Drought:** As punishment against Ahab for building the temple for Baal worship at Samaria, Elijah predicted that a drought would grip the land. Then he fled to the eastern side of the Jordan River and later to Zarephath on the Mediterranean coast to escape Ahab's wrath. At both sites he was kept alive through miraculous means. While staying at a widow's home, he performed a miracle by bringing her son back to life <1 Kings 17:1-24>.

Contest on Mount Carmel: After the drought had lasted three years, the Lord instructed Elijah to present himself before Ahab with the message that the Lord would provide rain. Elijah then challenged the 850 prophets of Baal and Asheroth to a contest on Mount Carmel <1 Kings 18:21>. Each side would offer sacrifices to their God without building a fire. The ignition of the fire was left to the strongest god, who would thereby reveal himself as the true God. While praying to God, Elijah poured water over his sacrifice to remove any possibility of fraud or misunderstanding about the offering. When Elijah's sacrifice was consumed by fire from heaven, the people of Israel responded strongly in favor of God <1 Kings 18:39>. Then the prophets of Baal and Asheroth were slaughtered at Elijah's command <1 Kings 18:40>, and God sent rain to end the drought <1 Kings 18:41-46>.

Flight from Jezebel: Queen Jezebel was furious over the fate of the prophets of Baal. She vowed that she would take revenge on Elijah. He was forced to flee to the desert south of Beersheba, eventually arriving at Mount Horeb - the mountain where Moses received the Ten Commandments. It is significant that this loyal follower of the Law came at last to the place where the commandments were first given. Like Moses, Elijah was sustained for 40 days and nights in the wilderness.

Elijah's Contribution: The prophet Elijah understood that the nation of Israel had a mission to preserve its religious system - the worship of the one true God - in a pure form without any mixture with idol worship. Elijah was strongly opposed to the worship of pagan gods such as Baal and Asherah. This uncompromising stand often endangered his life by bringing him into conflict with those in positions of power, especially Queen Jezebel and her followers. Elijah's impact on the prophetic movement among the Hebrew people was extensive. He stands as the transitional figure between Samuel (the adviser



and anointer of kings) and the later writing prophets. Like the prophets who followed him, Elijah emphasized Israel's responsibility for total commitment to their God and the covenant responsibilities, which God and His people had sworn to each other. Both these ideas are more fully developed in later prophets, such as Amos and Hosea.